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Olona Fiber Gets An Official Report.

MANUFACTURED IT

Mechanical Extractor Might Make Fiber a Source of Profit.

WARED G. SMITH, special agent in charge of the United States Agricultural Experiment Station, has received from Dr. N. Russel of Mountain View, Hawali, an interesting sketch of the Olona fibre, its growth, characteristics and manufacture into

The article, with samples of the fibre, s to be forwarded to the Washington Department of Agriculture for a scientific analysis, and for information in regard to a suitable mechanical extrac-Deposits received and interest allow-ed at 4% per cent per annum, in ac-cordance with rules and regulations, copies of which may be obtained on application.

regard to a suitable mechanical extrac-tor, which Dr. Russel says is needed before the cultivation of the fibre can become a success financially in Ha-

The following is the article furnished by Dr. Russel, which will be forwarded to Washington:

OLONA FIBRE.

Botany-Olona is a native Hawaiian name of a single botanical Hawaiian species of plant of the Urticaceae family. In Hillebrand's "Flora of the Hawaiian Islands," we find (page 415) the following quotation from Gaud. Bot. Vey. Bon. tab. 94, D. C. Prod. 16, Sect. pp. 236-13;

Touchardia latifolia. A shrub, 4-8 ft. high, with a viscid juice, sparingly dividing into stout branches, the youngest hispide but soon glabrate. Leaves on petioles of 3-9', ovate, 9-16'x 5-9, acute or acuminate, obtusely crenate, rounded at the base, chartaceous, dark green on both faces and glabrous, excepting a few hairlets on the nerves, tripli-nerved, the lateral nerves not reaching the middle of the margin, penni nerved higher up, with rectangular areoles. Stipules 2', acute. Glomerules of flowers generally arranged in repeatedly forking cymes, with one branch suppressed and the middle glomerule sessile. The male cymes longer (3-5') and broader (5-6') than the female which are also more crowded. Male glomerules 6-8" in diameter. Perigone 3½ to 2", the lanceolate seg-ments hooded and obtuse or tubercu-late below the apex. Stamens shortly excerted, anthers large, white. Rudiment of pistil glabrous. Fem. glomerules 4-5". Perigone 1", orange colored when mature. Style as long as the achene.-Wedd. Monogr. Ort., p. 142, tab. 3. Wawra in Flora, 1874, p. 547." This quotation is accompanied with the following foot-note by Hillebrand: "In deep ravines on all islands, but by ne means common. It is the "Olona" of the natives, which yields a fibre highly prized for tenacity and durability, and is chiefly employed for making

fishing nets. . . The species, as a rule, is dioecious." History-Some 50 years ago about 000 natives were living on the margin of the virgin forest and pahoe-hoe rock along the trail connecting Hilo town with the crater of Kilauea, Island of Hawaii, in a spot corresponding to the present 22-mile point of the Vol-cano road. Making of "kapa" (native cloth) out of "Mamake" bark (Pipturus albidus, Urticaceae), of Olona fibre for fishing nets out of Touchardia latifolia, and capturing "O-U" birds for the sake of the few precious reliew feathers under the swings, of which luxurious royal

ease, syphilis, leprosy, tuberculosis, smallpox, etc., this settlement gradually dwindled away and in 1862 the few surviving members migrated to other localities. At present only patches of wild bananas, taro and heaps of stones caltered in the forest indicate the places of former habitation and induslate as the seventies Kalakaua still evied a tax in Olona fibre from the natives of Puna and Olaa districts, which fibre he sold at high prices to Swiss Alpine clubs, who valued it for its light weight and great strength. Conditions of Growth-Touchardia grous abundantly in Olaa forests, preserting a kind of a natural plantation. It very successfully holds its own in competition with ferns and other elements of the undergrowth, in the shade of "Ohia" trees (Metrosideros polymorpha). The deep shade, very porous oil, considerable moisture with a yearly rainfall of 180 inches, pretty evenly distributed, are the natural conditions. By removing some of the undergrowth, scattering the seed, and probably by planting cuttings, the number of plants the same area could be greatly inreused with but very small expense. Since plants of medium age (about 18 months old) supply the best fibre, natives, in gathering, used to turn down the older ones with the foot, laying the whole plant on the ground to force new hoots and sprouts.

Manufacture-I was familiar with the plant and its properties for years, but the reason that to all appearances the same difficulties in mechanical extraction of fibre will be met as in the case of Ramee, for which no satisfactory cently my interest in the matter was sguin aroused by Mr. Jared G. Smith of the Hawaii Experiment Station. Considering that Touchardia seems to be free from resinous matter, upon his suggestion I decided to examine the subject more in detail. For this purpose an old native, born and raised in the settlement above mentioned, was interviewed. Together with him I proceeded into the forest along 22 miles side trail. In my presence he picked the plants, stripped them of the bark, and with his own olden tools manufactured the sample of fibre, which I beg

(Continued on Page 12.)

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